MARVEL COMICS
BOOK TWO
THE THANOS QUEST
GAMES AND PRIZES
JIM STARLIN
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BOOK TWO

THE THANOS QUEST™

'GAMES AND PRIZES'

JIM STARLIN ✦ RON LIM ✦ JOHN BEATTY ✦ TOM VINCENT

Six Soul Gems. They contain the power to control the universe. But can they give Thanos that which he desires most?

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THE
THANOS
QUEST
PART 2
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In life he worshipped Death and died serving her. As his reward Mistress Death reanimated his soul and granted him a new body with greatly enhanced powers. Such a faithful thrall should not go unexploited.

His task: to annihilate half the population of the universe in order to achieve a cosmic balance Death desires, a bloody job that would take centuries to accomplish.

But evil Thanos is a schemer and not one to be content in the role of servant to anyone, even Death. The hunger for power forever gnaws at his innards.

Then one day while gazing into the Infinity Well the dark Titan found the way to satisfy his every desire.

He begged Death to allow him the chance to seek out the six Infinity Gems. Thanos assured his mistress, that with these talismans, all she asked of him could be accomplished in a fraction of the originally determined timetable. She agreed to the request and so began the Thanos Quest.

From the In-Betweener Thanos gained his first prize, the one jewel truly worthy of the name Soul Gem. With this emerald treasure, which once belonged to Adam Warlock, the doorways to the soul can be opened.

Thanos wrested the Gem of Power from the Elder known as the Champion. This jewel has the ability to tap into a seemingly limitless reservoir of energy with which to empower the rest of the Infinity Gems.

The third gem Thanos captured from the Gardener, yet another Elder. This beauty turns out to be capable of manipulating time, opening the portals of infinity to its owner.

Three gems of terrible power within Thanos's grasp. Three more to be gathered. And with the completion of the set? Godhood? Or something beyond even that?

So continues the quest.

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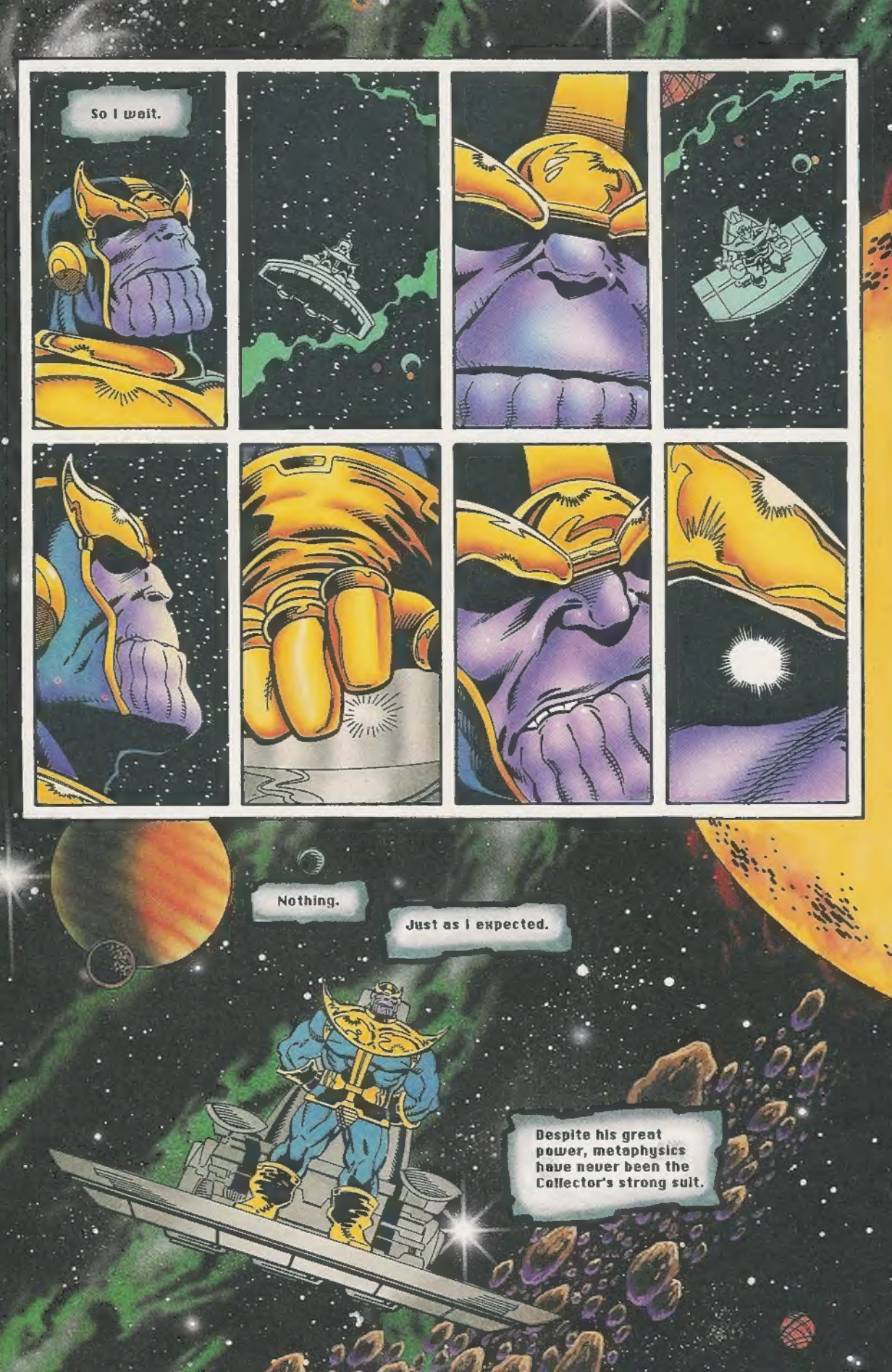
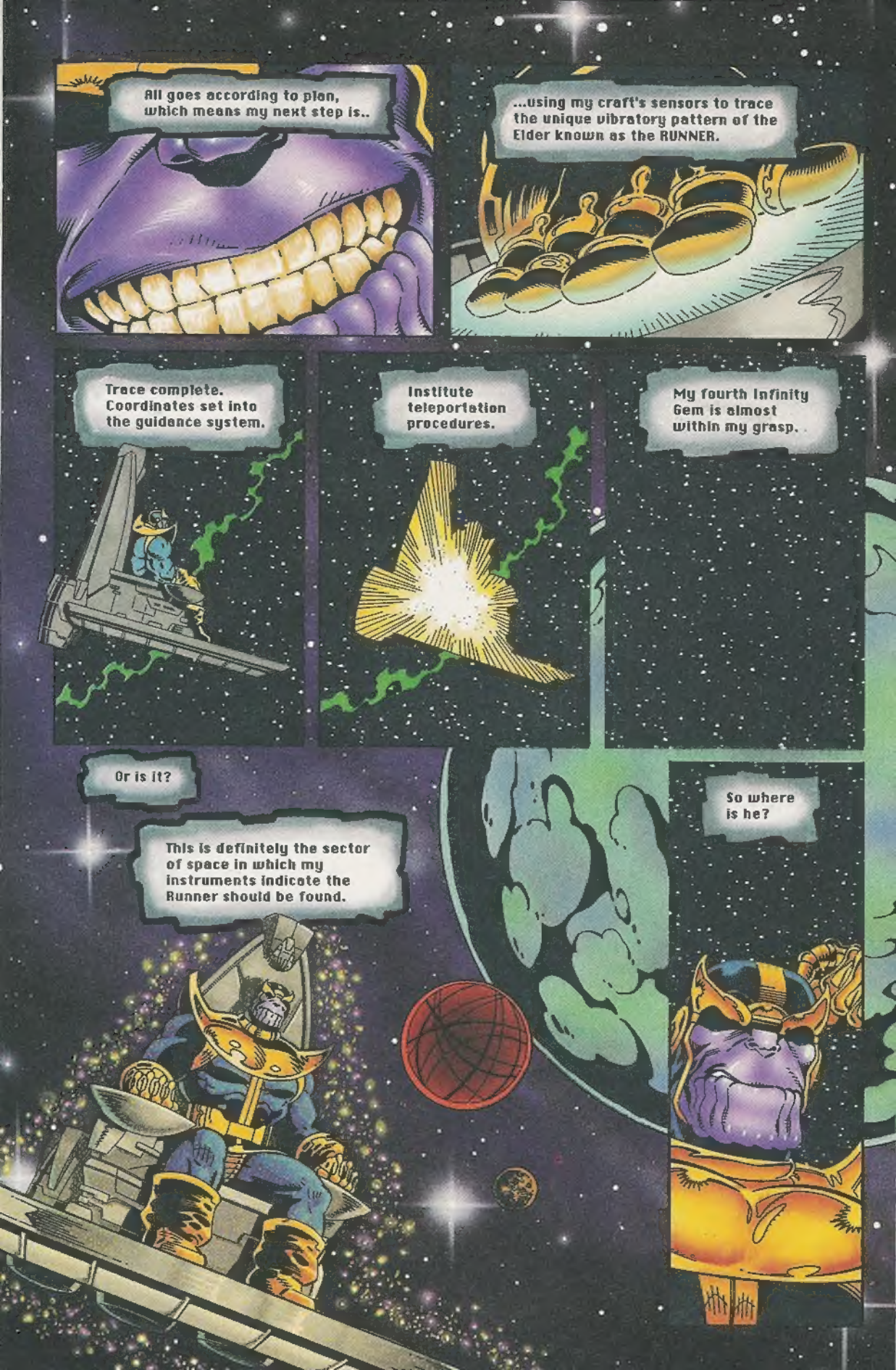
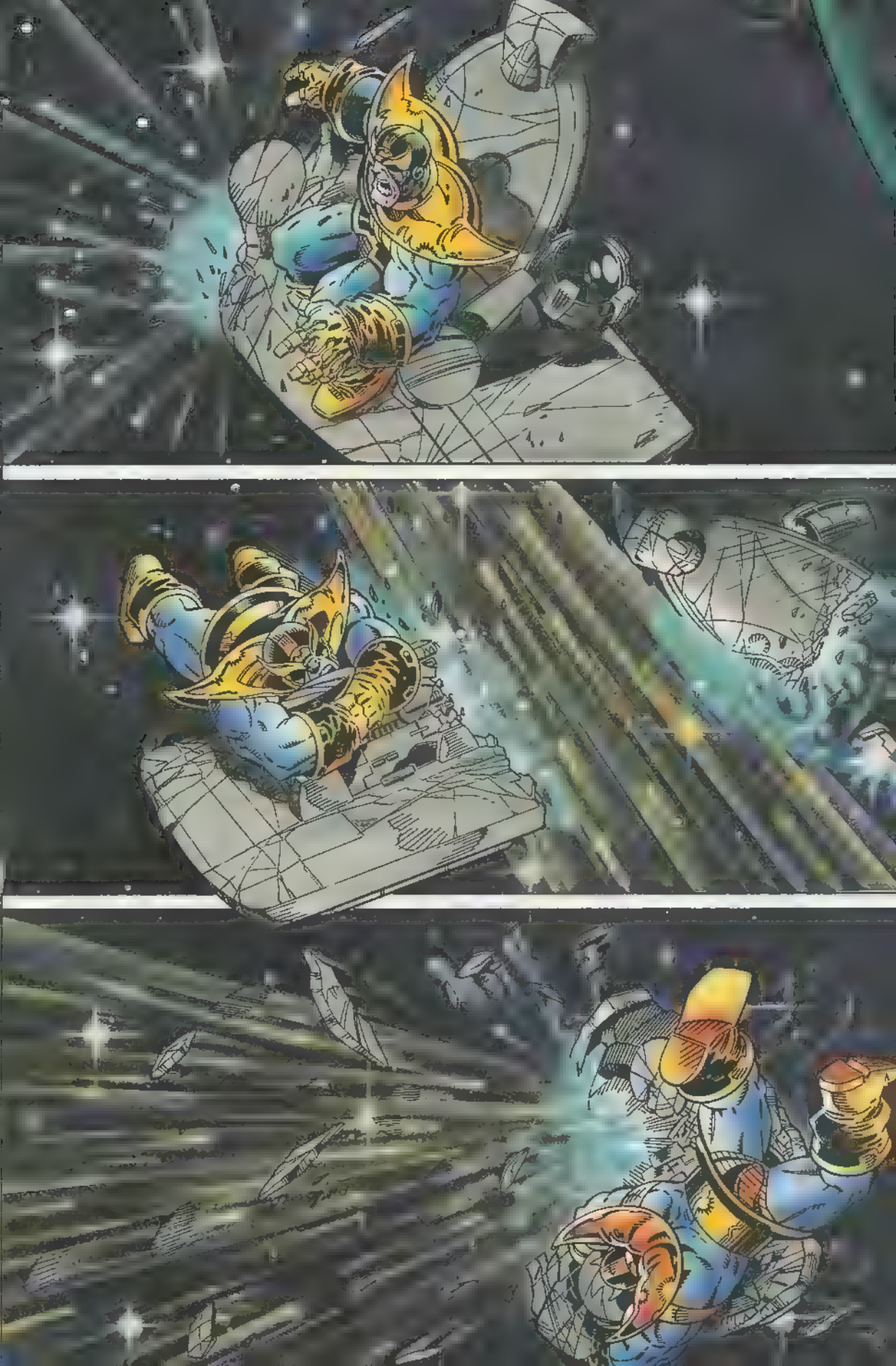
He is the COLLECTOR, an Elder.
He is so named because that is exactly what he does. He collects things and people.
That is his mania. If it is rare, the Collector desires it. He has power, knowledge, and skill, but only uses them to gain further beings and objects for his already gigantic collection.
But today his thoughts are not on his trophies. He awaits a sub-space communication.
A call from me.
bleep bleep

YES?
THANOS OF TITAN HERE.
I TAKE IT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN EXPECTING MY CALL?
OF COURSE.
WHICH MEANS YOU HAVE BEEN MONITORING MY ACTIVITIES, CORRECT?
YES, EVER SINCE YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH CHAMPION.
THEN YOU KNOW WHAT I AM AFTER.
YOU WANT MY SOUL GEM.
I PREFER TO CALL THEM INFINITY GEMS.
COLLECTOR, IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD THE ODD OCCASION OR TWO TO WORK TOGETHER.
BECAUSE OF THIS, I AM INCLINED TO BE GENEROUS WITH YOU.
I FULLY INTEND TO GAIN ALL MY DESIRES, BUT HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE YOUR DEATH IN THE PROCESS.
THAT SEEMS SOMEWHAT OUT OF CHARACTER FOR YOU, ALMOST HUMANE.
PERHAPS I'M GOING SOFT IN MY TWILIGHT YEARS.
AS I RECALL, YOU HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO BARTER CERTAIN ITEMS FROM YOUR COLLECTION FOR EVEN RARER TIDBITS YOU CRAVE.
THAT IS SO, EVEN THOUGH IT BREAKS MY HEART TO PART WITH ANY OF MY LOVIES.
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I WILL SOON COME INTO POSSESSION OF SOMETHING YOU WILL MOST CERTAINLY WISH TO ADD TO YOUR MENAGERIE.
SOMETHING YOU WILL GLADLY TRADE EVEN YOUR INFINITY GEM FOR.

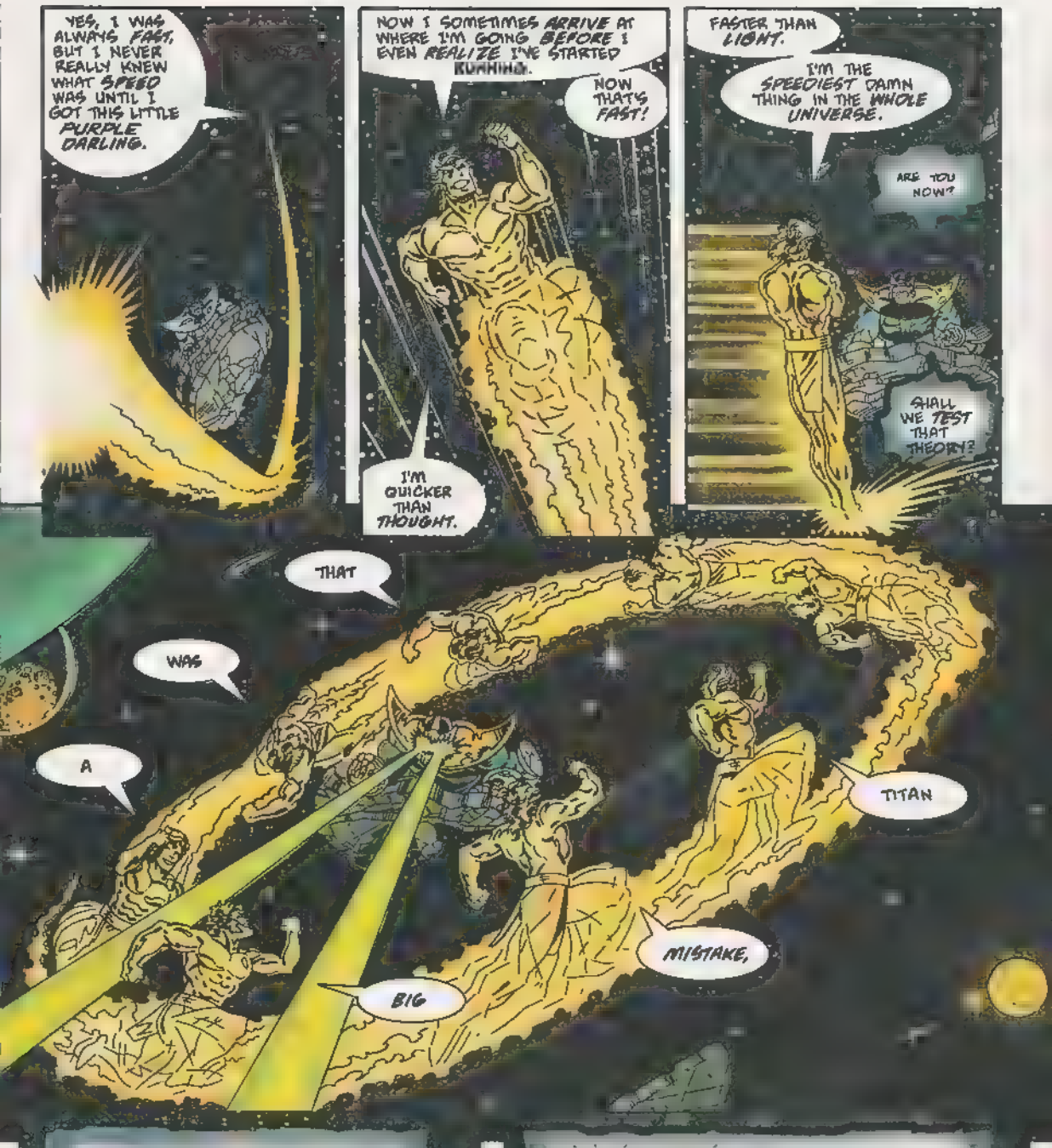
THAT ITEM WOULD HAVE TO BE SOMETHING TRULY UNIQUE FOR IT TO TAKE THE PLACE OF MY SOUL GEM.
IT IS.
I SHALL BE GETTING BACK TO YOU ON THIS MATTER.
Unless the Collector gets back to me first.
Which will mean he has unlocked the secret of his own Infinity Gem, that he knows how to use its power.
If that be the case, I will have little chance of surviving the Collector's response to my offer.
Perhaps this was a foolish move on my part, senseless bravado. But it was also the surest way of getting to the truth.
Some prizes demand taking great risks. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.


So I wait.
Nothing.
Just as I expected.
Despite his great power, metaphysics have never been the Collector's strong suit.


All goes according to plan, which means my next step is..
...using my craft's sensors to trace the unique vibratory pattern of the Elder known as the RUNNER.
Trace complete. Coordinates set into the guidance system.
Institute teleportation procedures.
My fourth Infinity Gem is almost within my grasp.
Or is it?
This is definitely the sector of space in which my instruments indicate the Runner should be found.
So where is he?



HAD ENOUGH, TITAN?
I BELIEVE I HAVE, RUNNER.
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE THAT QUICK ON YOUR FEET.
YEAH, SOMETIMES I AMAZE EVEN MYSELF.
AND YOU KNOW WHY I'M SO FAST?
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS BEAUTY RIGHT HERE.
THE GRAND MASTER WARNED ME YOU'D BE COMING FOR IT.



The Elder disappears into the depths of the ether in the blink of an eye.

Never have I witnessed such speed and maneuverability.

And what remains of my instrumentation shows that his speed has at least doubled by the time he turns back my way.

FACE IT, THANOS OLD BOY, THERE'S NOTHING UNDER THE STARS THAT CAN LAY A FINGER ON ME.
I'M JUST TOO FAST. NEED ANY FURTHER CONVINCING?
NO, I AM A BELIEVER.
THEN HERE'S THE DEAL, PURPLE PUSS.
YOU CAN EITHER TELL ME WHY YOU'RE SO HOT TO GET YOUR HANDS ON ALL THOSE SOUL GEMS, OR I CAN BEAT YOU TO DEATH AT SUPER SPEED!
WE CAN EITHER DO THIS THE EASY OR HARD WAY.

TALKING OR BEING TURNED INTO GRAPE JELLY.
WHICH IS IT GOING TO BE?
I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.
I DISCOVERED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE GEMS WHILE GAZING INTO THE INFINITY WELL.
IT WAS A WELL KEPT SECRET FOR OVER A THOUSAND BILLION YEARS. THE GEMS COME FROM BEFORE ALL RECORDED TIME.
THEY WERE ONCE A SINGLE UNIT, A LONE ENTITY.
THEY WERE A SENTIENT BEING OF LIMITLESS POWER.
AT THE TIME, THIS BEING WAS THE ONLY LIVING THING THAT EXISTED WITHIN ANY AND ALL REALITIES.
It was all that was and all that was was it.
This being was infinity and forever.
No one would fault you if you were to call it God. What other name would fit?
But I doubt it ever had a name or any use for one.

FOR IT WAS MORE ALONE THAN ANY BEING HAS EVER BEEN.
ALL THAT WAS WAS ALREADY PART OF ITSELF. THERE WAS NO OTHER IN ITS LIFE.
A MORE DESOLATE EXISTENCE IS BEYOND IMAGINATION.
I BELIEVE THAT IS WHY IT CHOSE TO PUT AN END TO ITSELF.
BUT SUCH POWER DOES NOT GIVE UP THE GHOST EASILY.
FROM ITS ASHES ROSE ALL THAT IS CURRENTLY REALITY, IN ALL ITS MANY FORMS.
THE CORE OF THIS BEING'S MIGHT WAS REINCARNATED IN THE FORM OF THE SIX INFINITY GEMS.
THEY ARE THE ULTIMATE IN POWER, THE DARKEST SECRET IN ALL THE UNIVERSE.
IT WAS BY MERE CHANCE THAT I HAPPENED UPON IT WHILE STUDYING THE WELL'S DEPTHS.
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? THE GREATEST SECRET OF THE AGES SITTING OUT IN PLAIN SIGHT FOR EONS, WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO NOTICE IT.
WITH SUCH POWER UNDER MY CONTROL, I MIGHT SIT AT DEATH'S SIDE...
..AS HER EQUAL.
MY, SUCH A TOUCHING AMBITION, COMING FROM SUCH A DREARY FELLOW.
PITY IT'S A DREAM THAT WILL NEVER BE FULFILLED.
AT LEAST NOT BY YOU.
THE SECRET OF THE INFINITY GEMS IS NOW MINE ALONE.

I THINK NOT.
HOW DID A FOOL LIKE YOU EVER GAIN IMMORTALITY?
BH...BY BEING THE BEST AT WHAT I DO, NAMELY, RUNNING.
AND, BY BEING THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF ONE OF THE FIRST SENTIENT RACES SPAWNED BY THE UNIVERSE.
WELL, IT CERTAINLY WASN'T FOR THINKING, WAS IT?
THE ONLY INTELLIGENCE YOU'VE EXHIBITED SO FAR IS REALIZING YOUR SPEED WAS THE ONLY THING THAT COULD SAVE YOU FROM ME.
A STRATEGY PROVIDED TO YOU BY THE GRAND MASTER, NO DOUBT.
BUT YOU STILL COULDN'T RESIST STOPPING TO GLORY ONCE YOU THOUGHT ME DEFEATED.
THOUGHT?
NOT ALL WEAPONS ARE SOMETHING YOU WOULD RECOGNIZE AS SUCH.
SOME DEADLY TOYS APPEAR TO BE NOTHING BUT HARMLESS BAUBLES.
USUALLY THEY ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS TYPE OF WEAPON.
INFINITY GEMS, THE GARDENER'S CONTROLS TIME.
HE WAS ABLE TO SOMEWHAT TAP INTO ITS POWER WITHOUT TRULY REALIZING IT.
IT WAS A SUBCONSCIOUS ACT, MUCH THE WAY YOU WERE ABLE TO UTILIZE YOUR GEM.

YOUR GEM DIDN'T MAKE YOU FASTER. IT ALLOWED YOU TO SUBCONSCIOUSLY MANIPULATE SPACE.
THAT'S WHY YOU SOMETIMES ARRIVED AT A DESTINATION BEFORE YOU REALIZED YOU WERE EVEN HEADING FOR IT.
IT'S CALLED MENTAL TELEPORTATION.
OF COURSE, THAT'S ONLY A PART OF WHAT THIS WONDROUS JEWEL IS CAPABLE OF.
BUT YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ANY OF THIS, ARE YOU?
YOU CAN'T HEAR A WORD I'M SAYING.
ONE OF THE DISADVANTAGES OF OLD AGE...
...THANKS TO THE POWER OF THE GARDENER'S INFINITY GEM.
TELL ME, RUNNER, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE MORE THAN A MILLION YEARS OLD?

YOU ELDERS AREN'T QUITE AS IMMORTAL AS YOU IMAGINED.
GREATLY DECELERATED AGING, NOTHING MORE. STILL MORTAL THOUGH YOU COULD REMAIN LIKE THIS FOR, OH, ANOTHER FEW BILLION YEARS.
THIS IS A ROUGH WAY TO DISCOVER SUCH A FACT, ISN'T IT?
BUT DON'T WORRY, I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU IN SO SORRY A PREDICAMENT.
YOU WILL BE MORE USE TO ME IN A MUCH YOUNGER FORM
FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER.
IS THIS STATE MORE TO YOUR LIKING?
YOU KNOW, RUNNER, YOU APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN A PLEASANT ENOUGH CHILD.
A PITY YOU GREW INTO SUCH A ROTTER.
MAYBE YOU'LL TURN OUT BETTER THIS SECOND TIME AROUND.
"But do not fret, child
"We are now heading off on a little trip.
"Going to visit your Uncle Collector."

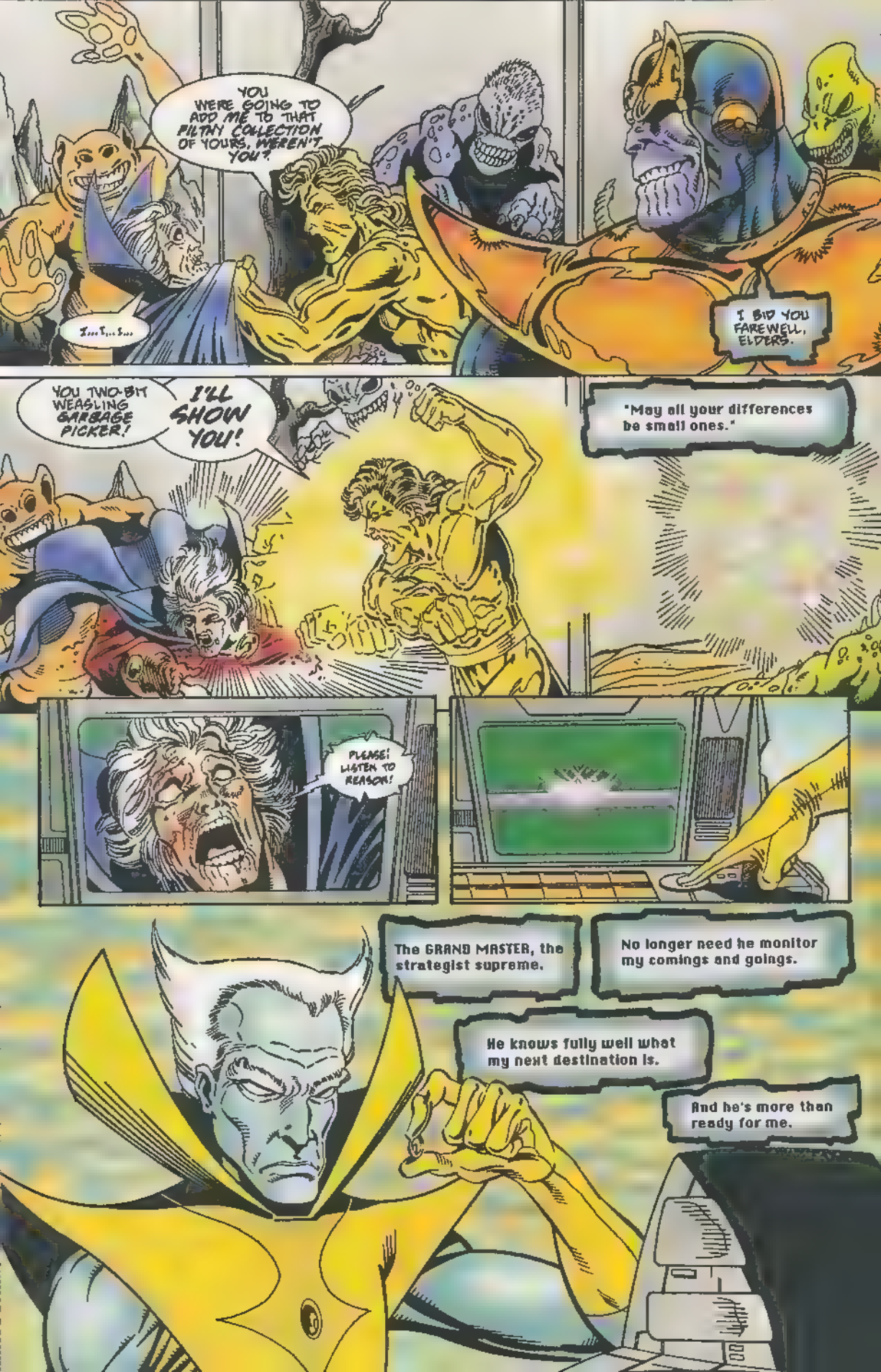
Of course the Collector's ready for me, all set to blow this Titan to atoms the moment I appear outside his floating treasure house.
That's why I decide to teleport directly inside the installation, instead.
YOU CAN TURN DOWN YOUR DEFENSE SCREEN, COLLECTOR
IT IS A TERRIBLE WASTE OF ENERGY, AND WOULD NOT HAVE STOPPED ME IF I HAD DECIDED TO CONFRONT IT.
SO I SEE.
WHAT HAVE YOU THERE?
A PRIZE OF GREAT VALUE AND EXTREME RARITY.
A TREASURE I AM WILLING TO TRADE FOR AN INFINITY GEM.
DO YOU NOT RECOGNIZE YOUR FELLOW ELDER, THE RUNNER?
UNBELIEVABLE...
YOU HAD BEST BELIEVE IT. TERRIBLY VULNERABLE IN THIS CONDITION, IS HE NOT?
A PERSON COULD DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING THEY WISHED TO WITH SUCH A HELPLESS BABE
INCLUDING ADDING HIM TO A COLLECTION OF RARE BEINGS.

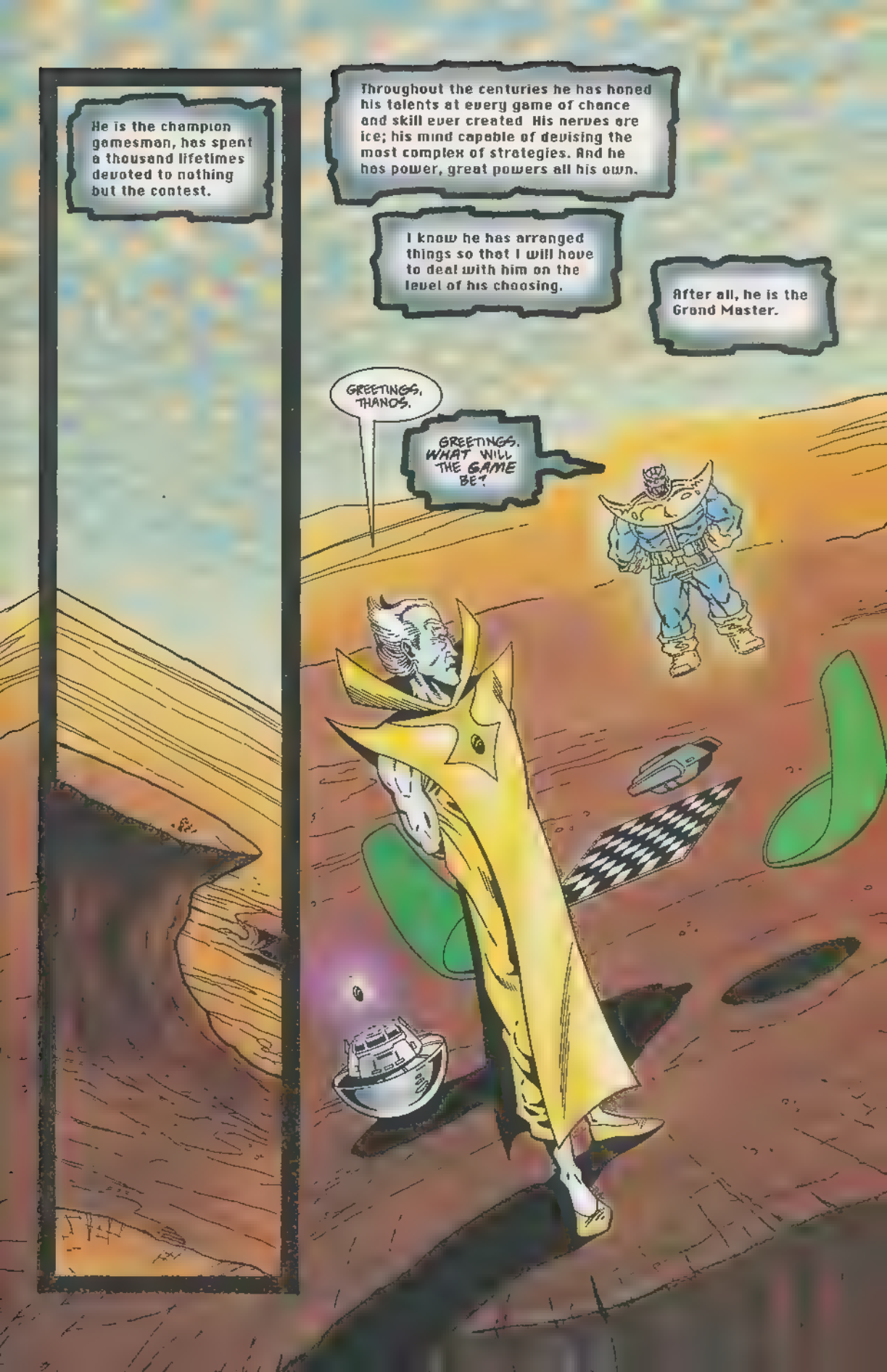
LIKE THE ONE YOU HAVE ABOARD THIS SHIP.
I WOULD IMAGINE POSSESSING YOUR VERY OWN ELDER WOULD MAKE FOR THE CROWNING TOUCH ON SUCH A GROUPING.
A TEMPTING THOUGHT.
SO, WHICH IS IT TO BE, COLLECTOR: BARTER OR BATTLE?
YOUR ANSWER, ELDER?
I WILL ACCEPT THE DEAL UNDER ONE CONDITION.
WHICH IS?
THAT A PROMISE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN MY EXISTENCE ACCOMPANIES THE CHILD.
YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT, COLLECTOR.
AND, AS YOU KNOW, THANOS ALWAYS HONORS HIS PLEDGES.
SO I'VE HEARD.
COME TO ME, MY CHILD.
YOU'LL FIND YOUR TREASURE, THANOS, IN YONDER DISPLAY CASE.

IT'S NOT A VERY GOOD BARGAIN YOU'VE STRUCK THIS DAY, TITAN.
I'VE STUDIED THAT TRINKET THROUGH EVERY SCIENTIFIC MEANS AVAILABLE, AND IT IS MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT...
...IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A WORTHLESS HUNK OF POLISHED GLASS!
I'M NOT SURPRISED TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, OLD FRIEND.
TO OPEN THIS JEWEL'S HIDDEN SECRET REQUIRES GREAT IMAGINATION.
SOMETHING A COLLECTOR OF TRIVIA WOULD BE SORELY LACKING IN.
THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS GEM'S POWER IS NOT SOMETHING YOU WOULD HAVE ACCIDENTALLY STUMBLED UPON, OR EVEN EASILY GRASPED MENTALLY.
MY GUESS IS THAT MORE THAN ONE MIND HAS BEEN SHATTERED CONTEMPLATING THIS TRINKET.
ITS POTENTIAL IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF MOST INTELLECTS.
THIS GEM CAN CONTROL REALITY.

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE A MERE IOTA OF ITS MIGHT.

HUMBLING, ISN'T IT?
I HAD IT IN MY POSSESSION ALL THIS TIME AND...
TAKE IT AWAY FROM HERE! PLEASE!
GLADLY.
NOW ONLY THE GRAND MASTER'S INFINITY GEM REMAINS TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE FOLD.
HE'LL NOT BE AS EASILY DUPED AS I WAS, TITAN
NO. I ANTICIPATE HIM BEING MY MOST DIFFICULT ADVERSARY.
THAT IS WHY I HAVE SAVED HIM FOR LAST.
IT IS A CONFLICT I MUST NOW HASTEN TO.
BUT BEFORE I GO, THERE IS SOMETHING I SHOULD TELL YOU.
THAT SPELL OF INFANCY I PLACED ON THE RUNNER...
...ITS EFFECTS ARE ONLY TEMPORARY.


YOU WERE GOING TO ADD ME TO THAT FILTHY COLLECTION OF YOURS, WEREN'T YOU?
I... I... I...
I BID YOU FAREWELL, ELDERS.
YOU TWO-BIT WEASLING GARBAGE PICKER!
I'LL SHOW YOU!
"May all your differences be small ones."
PLEASE! LISTEN TO REASON!
The GRAND MASTER, the strategist supreme.
No longer need he monitor my comings and goings.
He knows fully well what my next destination is.
And he's more than ready for me.


He is the champion gamesman, has spent a thousand lifetimes devoted to nothing but the contest.
Throughout the centuries he has honed his talents at every game of chance and skill ever created. His nerves are ice; his mind capable of devising the most complex of strategies. And he has power, great powers all his own.
I know he has arranged things so that I will have to deal with him on the level of his choosing.
After all, he is the Grand Master.
GREETINGS, THANOS.
GREETINGS. WHAT WILL THE GAME BE?

ARE YOU NOT THE LEAST BIT INTERESTED AS TO WHY YOU MUST MATCH WITS WITH ME IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE YOUR FINAL OBJECTIVE?
NO BUT I SUSPECT YOU ARE GOING TO INSIST ON TELLING ME NONETHELESS
MOST DEFINITELY.
TO BEGIN WITH, THERE AWAITS THE PRIZE YOU DESIRE
THAT IS A PAN-DIMENSIONAL TRANSPORTER THE GEM FLOATS ABOVE.
SEVERAL LAYERS OF FORCE SHIELDING PROTECT THE GEM AND THE TRANSPORTER FROM THEFT AND/OR TAMPERING.
MOST IMPRESSIVE.
IT GETS BETTER
IF EVEN ONE OF THOSE SHIELDS IS BREACHED, THE TRANSPORTER IS PROGRAMMED TO GO INTO IMMEDIATE OPERATION.
AND?
CONTINUOUS RANDOM DESTINATION SELECTION. THE GEM WILL BE INSTANTLY TELEPORTED TO AN UNKNOWN LOCATION.
A LOCATION I WON'T BE ABLE TO TRACE THROUGH THE TRANSPORTER, BECAUSE...
...IT WILL SELF-DESTRUCT AS SOON AS IT COMPLETES ITS FUNCTION.
YOU CATCH ON QUICKLY, TITAN.

AND, OF COURSE, YOU REALIZE THE TRANSPORTER IS SET TO ACTIVATE SHOULD ANYTHING INTERRUPT MY ORGANIC VITAL SIGNS, WHICH ARE BEING CONSTANTLY TRANSMITTED TO IT.
NATURALLY
SO, IN OTHER WORDS, I MUST PLAY YOUR SILLY GAME OR FORGET ABOUT EVER GAINING THE SIXTH GEM.
YOU'LL SOON SEE JUST HOW SILLY THIS GAME REALLY IS.
THE TRANSPORTER IS PROGRAMMED TO SHUT DOWN IN THE EVENT I LOSE OUR LITTLE ENCOUNTER.
AND THE CONTEST?
A QUASI-MILITARY EXERCISE SET ON A MENTAL PLANE OF EXISTENCE.
EACH CONTESTANT WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH AN IDENTICAL SUIT OF BATTLE ARMOR.
A KILLSHOT WILL IMMOBILIZE THE LOSER AND TERMINATE THE GAME PROGRAM.
I TAKE IT YOU'RE WILLING TO PUT UP YOUR FIVE SOUL GEMS AS A WAGER IN THIS CONTEST, JUST TO MAKE THINGS MORE INTERESTING.
WHY NOT? I DO NOT PLAN ON LOSING.
I HAVE PLACED THE GEMS IN A STASIS FIELD THAT WILL DEACTIVATE IN THE EVENT OF MY DEATH.

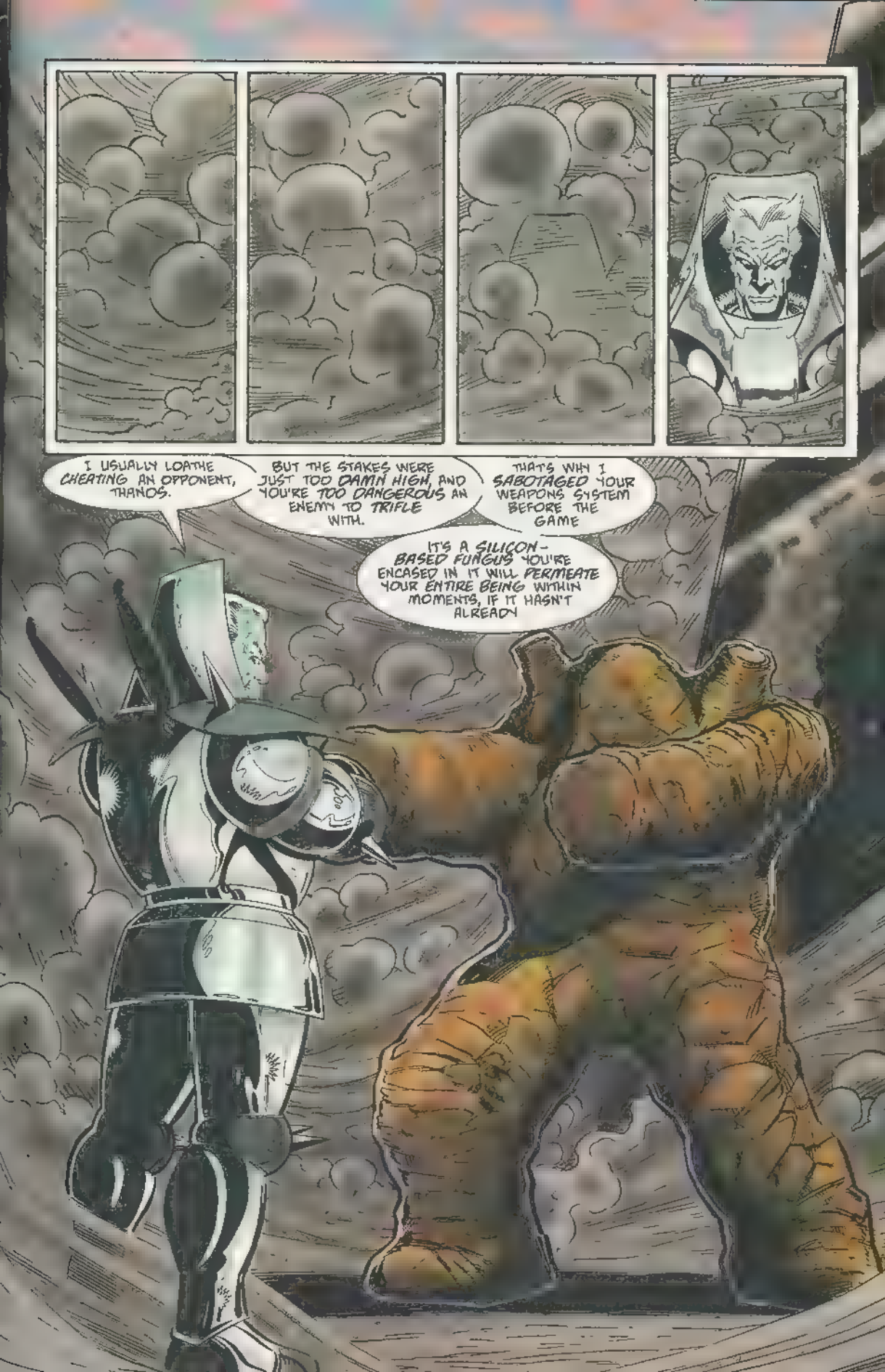
I ALWAYS LIKE TO PLAY FOR THE HIGHEST STAKES POSSIBLE
BEFORE WE DON OUR HEADSETS, HAVE YOU ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?
IT ALL SEEMS SIMPLE ENOUGH CHILDISHLY SIMPLE
THEN SHALL WE BEGIN?
READY ANY TIME YOU ARE.
I must admit, the program is much more sophisticated than I imagined it would be.
I could swear the battle armour I wear is real and not some computer generated illusion.

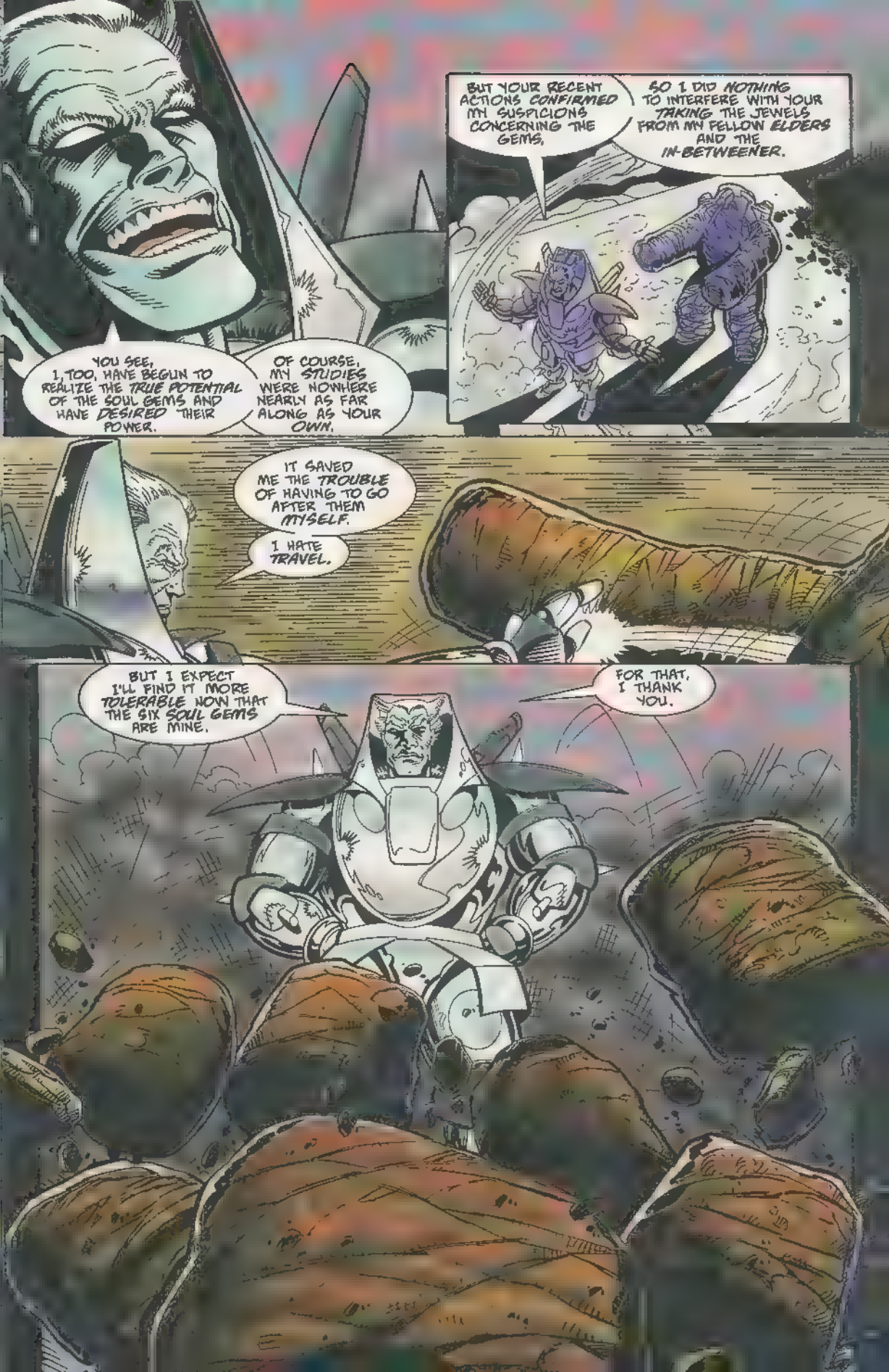
And the gaming arena is equally impressive.
Like all the Grand Master's fantasies, it has no link with reality but nonetheless has a reality all its own.
I also realize in a flash that the Grand Master has lied to me.
I sense the truth of the program. A killshot will not just immobilize. It will actually kill. Kill as truly as if the shot were taken back on the plane of reality.
Am I surprised? Not at all. I expected no less from the Grand Master.
The stakes we play for are astronomical. In his place I would have done the same.
The Grand Master wastes no time with preliminary jousts.
He immediately goes for the throat.

But I have played this game a thousand times back in the real world.
I know the rules and how to break them.
And like the Grand Master, I realize the best defense is a strong offense
Unfortunately the Grand Master also appreciates the value of a strategic retreat.
His aerial assault admittedly catches me off guard.

Some old tricks are still as effective as the first time they were ever used.

Years of experience immediately warn the Grand Master of the mistake he has made.
But it is too late for him to do anything about it.
CHECK.
CHECKMATE.
A cliché to the very end.


I USUALLY LOATHE CHEATING AN OPPONENT, THANOS.
BUT THE STAKES WERE JUST TOO DAMN HIGH, AND YOU'RE TOO DANGEROUS AN ENEMY TO TRIFLE WITH.
THAT'S WHY I SABOTAGED YOUR WEAPONS SYSTEM BEFORE THE GAME
IT'S A SILICON-BASED FUNGUS YOU'RE ENCASED IN IT WILL PERMEATE YOUR ENTIRE BEING WITHIN MOMENTS, IF IT HASN'T ALREADY


YOU SEE, I, TOO, HAVE BEGUN TO REALIZE THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF THE SOUL GEMS AND HAVE DESIRED THEIR POWER.
OF COURSE, MY STUDIES WERE NOWHERE NEARLY AS FAR ALONG AS YOUR OWN.
BUT YOUR RECENT ACTIONS CONFIRMED MY SUSPICIONS CONCERNING THE GEMS,
SO I DID NOTHING TO INTERFERE WITH YOUR TAKING THE JEWELS FROM MY FELLOW ELDERS AND THE IN-BETWEENER.
IT SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF HAVING TO GO AFTER THEM MYSELF.
I HATE TRAVEL.
BUT I EXPECT I'LL FIND IT MORE TOLERABLE NOW THAT THE SIX SOUL GEMS ARE MINE.
FOR THAT, I THANK YOU.

NO...
IT CAN'T BE...

He had figured all the odds, worked all the angles, thought out every possibility.
But in some games that just is not enough.

Elders are not the only ones capable of cheating.
Of course, with the five Infinity Gems in my possession, I could have taken the sixth from the Grand Master in any of a thousand ways.
But this method was surely the most enjoyable.
The Grand Master was an idiot for not keeping the gem on his person.
He must have surely known its power.

It would have told him that it was a robot facing him across the gaming table.

For that is this Infinity Gem's talent.
It is a doorway into the mind.

But the Grand Master's ego got the best of him when he decided to count solely on his gambling abilities.
He lived the gambler's life to the last.

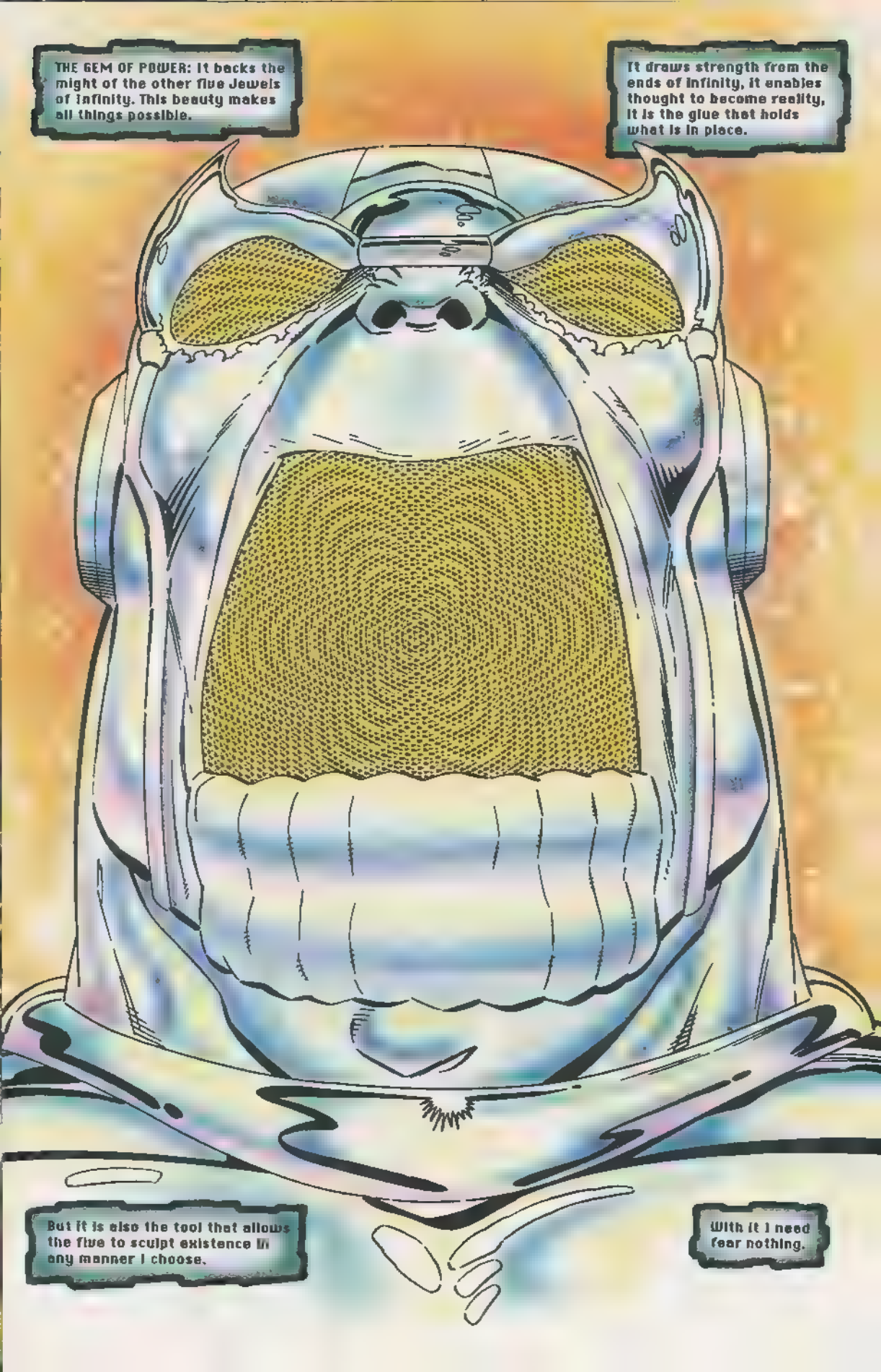
All in all, I am afraid the Elders proved to be a pretty ineffective and stupid lot.

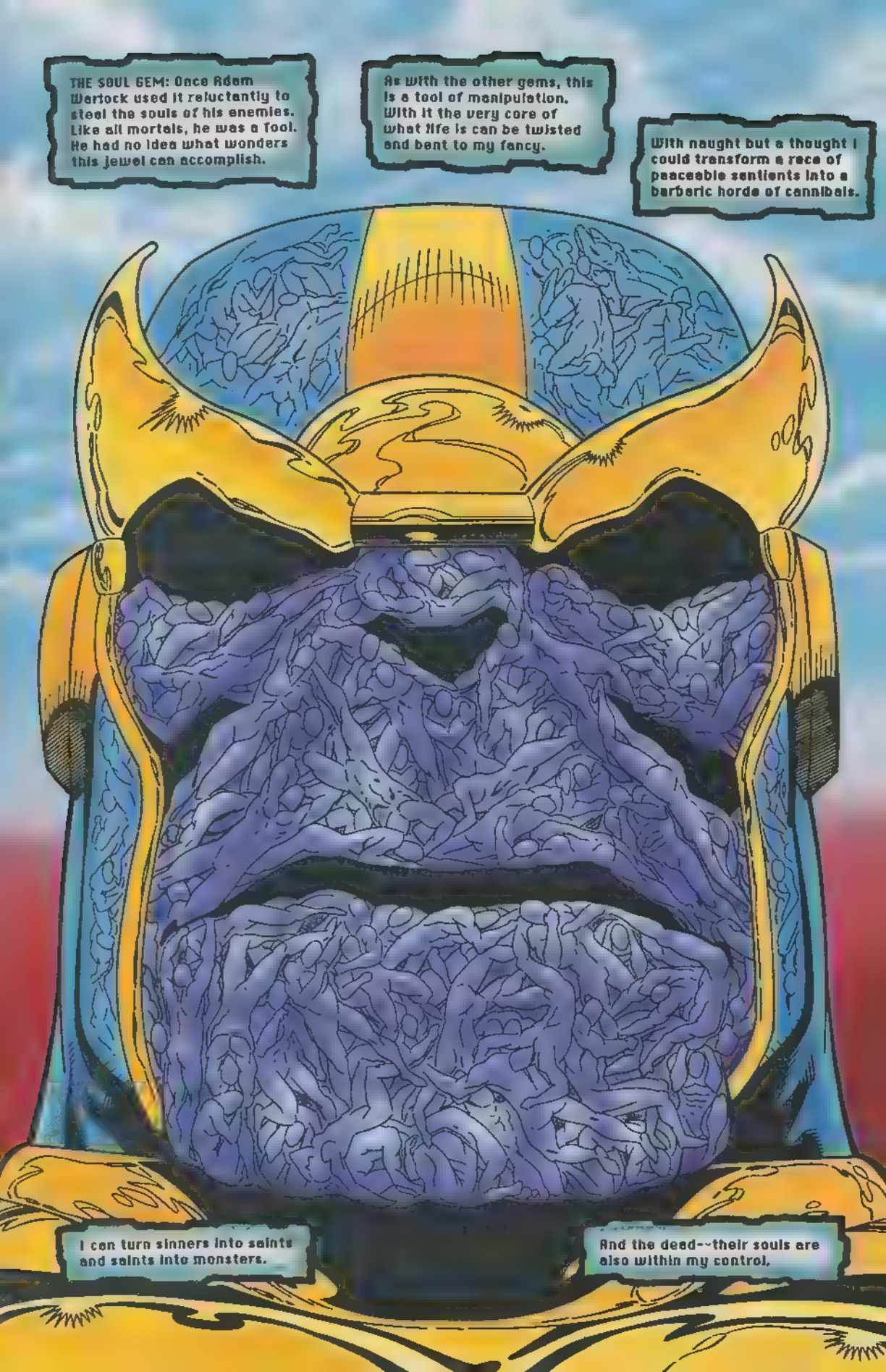
BUT THE GLORIOUS ENDS MORE THAN MAKE UP FOR THE TEDIOUS MEANS IT TOOK TO GAIN THEM.
MIND! SOUL!
REALITY! TIME! SPACE! POWER!
SO MUCH MORE THAN EVEN THE COSMIC CUBE GAVE ME!
ALL MINE!
I CONTROL IT ALL!
THE UNIVERSE BELONGS TO ME!

THE TIME GEM: With it I can reach back into the primordial past or delve into the far distant future.
Nothing that ever was or ever will be can hide from my inspection.
And if I find anything which offends, I can modify it to fit my every need or want.
Infinity is clay waiting for me to mold it.

THE SPACE GEM: Distance becomes a mere intellectual concept.
I consider the possibility and I am there. I can be everywhere or nowhere.
Space is mine to do with as I wish. The very heavens will rearrange themselves to conform with my sense of aesthetics.
I foresee a new universe on the horizon.

THE MIND GEM. No thought shall remain a secret to me. Every mind is mine to open and examine.
They touch me but do not affect me; for I am Thanos, far above such concerns
I can reach out and feel the dreams and aspirations of every living being in the entire universe.
Billions of fertile minds waiting for me to sew the seeds of my own perceptions and goals.
A universe of thralls


THE GEM OF POWER: It backs the might of the other five Jewels of Infinity. This beauty makes all things possible.
It draws strength from the ends of Infinity, it enables thought to become reality, it is the glue that holds what is in place.
But it is also the tool that allows the five to sculpt existence in any manner I choose.
With it I need fear nothing.


THE SOUL GEM: Once Adam Warlock used it reluctantly to steal the souls of his enemies. Like all mortals, he was a fool. He had no idea what wonders this jewel can accomplish.
As with the other gems, this is a tool of manipulation. With it the very core of what life is can be twisted and bent to my fancy.
With naught but a thought I could transform a race of peaceable sentients into a barbaric horde of cannibals.
I can turn sinners into saints and saints into monsters.
And the dead--their souls are also within my control.

THE REALITY GEM: How can one explain the inconceivable? Few rational minds can grasp the myriad actualities possible.
Heaven or Hell, mine to choose.
Scientific laws are within my power to repeal. Facts lose their meaning because they no longer have to be.
I dream and it will be

And what I wish to be is by the side of...
MY LOVE.
SURELY YOU SENSE THE CHANGE WITHIN ME? HOW COULD YOU NOT?
I AM POWER NEVER DREAMT OF BY EVEN ONE SUCH AS YOURSELF!
THANOS STANDS BEFORE YOU, AS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH!

I NOW EXIST ON A PLANE ABOVE ALL CARE. NO LONGER NEED I FEAR EVEN CHAOS AND ORDER.
FOR THEY ARE NOTHING BUT PART OF WHAT I AM AND CONTROL!
ALL THAT IS IS SLAVE TO MY WHIM.
I AM REALITY.
I AM INFINITY
I AM THE ALL ONLY
MY MISTRESS WISHES TO INFORM YOU THAT SHE COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDS YOUR WORDS AND ACTUALITY.
BUT SHE MUST ALSO COMPREHEND WHY I DID ALL THIS!
I DID IT FOR HER!
I LOVED, AND STILL DO LOVE, MY MISTRESS, BUT I COULD NOT BE CONTENT TO BE MERELY HER SLAVE.
ONE SUCH AS HER DESERVES A LOVER WHO IS HER EQUAL, OR BETTER!
MY VENTURE WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE A THREAT TO HER!
SHE IS MY LADY, AND I LOVE HER ABOVE ALL ELSE!
MY ONLY WISH IS TO BE HER CONSORT AND SIT AT HER SIDE AS AN EQUAL!

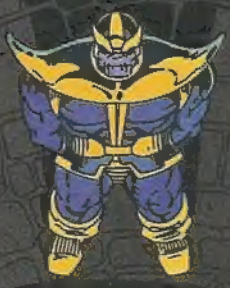
MISTRESS DEATH SAYS THAT LORD THANOS'S EVERY WISH IS HER COMMAND.
YOUR THRONE!
WE WILL SPEND AN ETERNITY OF BLISS TOGETHER, MY LOVE.
YOU WILL SEE
MY MISTRESS WISHES TO INFORM YOU IF THAT IS WHAT YOU WISH, THAT WILL BE WHAT IS.

WHY DO YOU STILL ADDRESS ME THROUGH YOUR MINIONS?
I AM YOUR MATE!
YOU WILL TALK TO ME DIRECTLY!
MY MISTRESS WISHES WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, TO POINT OUT THAT WITH YOUR NEWLY ACQUIRED POWER, YOU ARE NOT HER EQUAL.
YOU ARE HER SUPERIOR. IN ALL WAYS, YOU ARE MANY STATIONS ABOVE HER. SHE IS BUT A THREAD IN THE FABRIC THAT IS YOURSELF.
IT WOULD BE UNSEEMLY FOR EVEN MISTRESS DEATH TO ADDRESS THE ALL-POWERFUL DIRECTLY.

I could force her to speak directly to me.
I have the power to bend even her to my will.
But what good would that do?
That's not the way I wanted it to be.
I desire her love, not her blind subservience.
How could I have miscalculated so badly?

Thanos, the master schemer and deceiver.

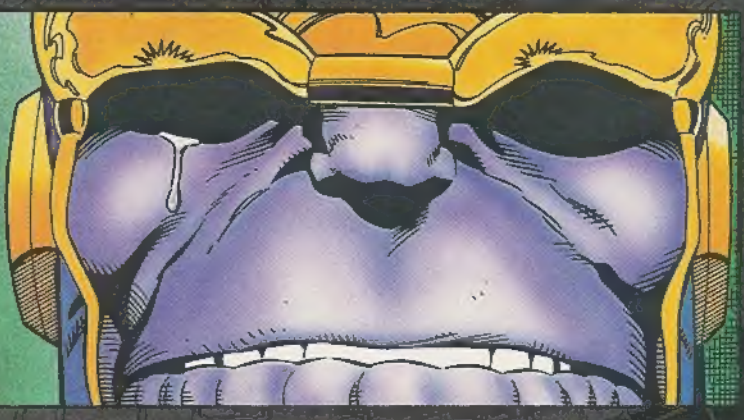
I set out on a quest beyond the reach of any but myself, an impossible mission.

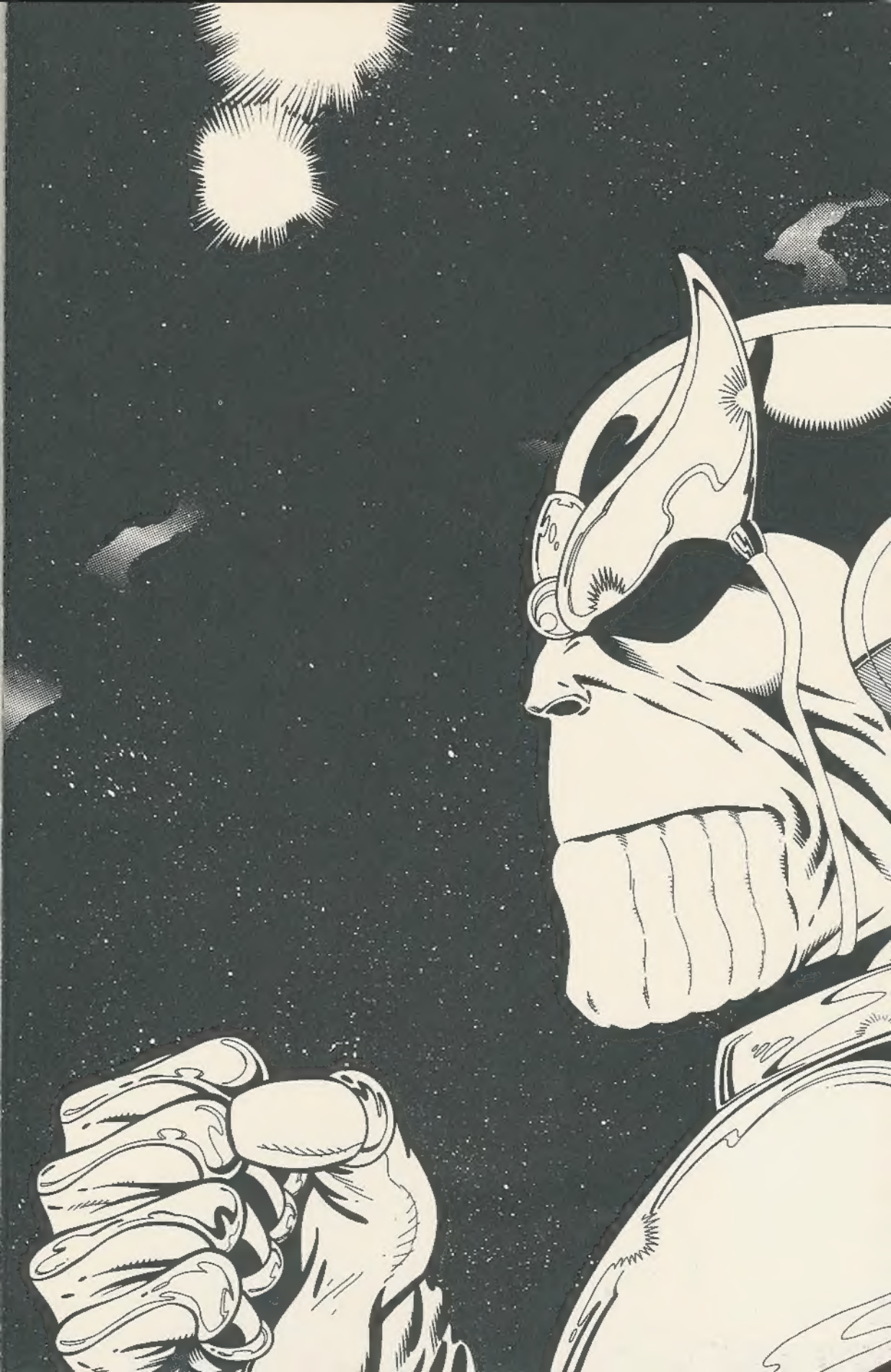


And I succeeded at it. I have wrestled the reins of power from the hands of the Supreme Being.

No sentient could ever dream or hope for more than I have accomplished.

Who could have guessed that becoming God would prove to be such a hollow victory?





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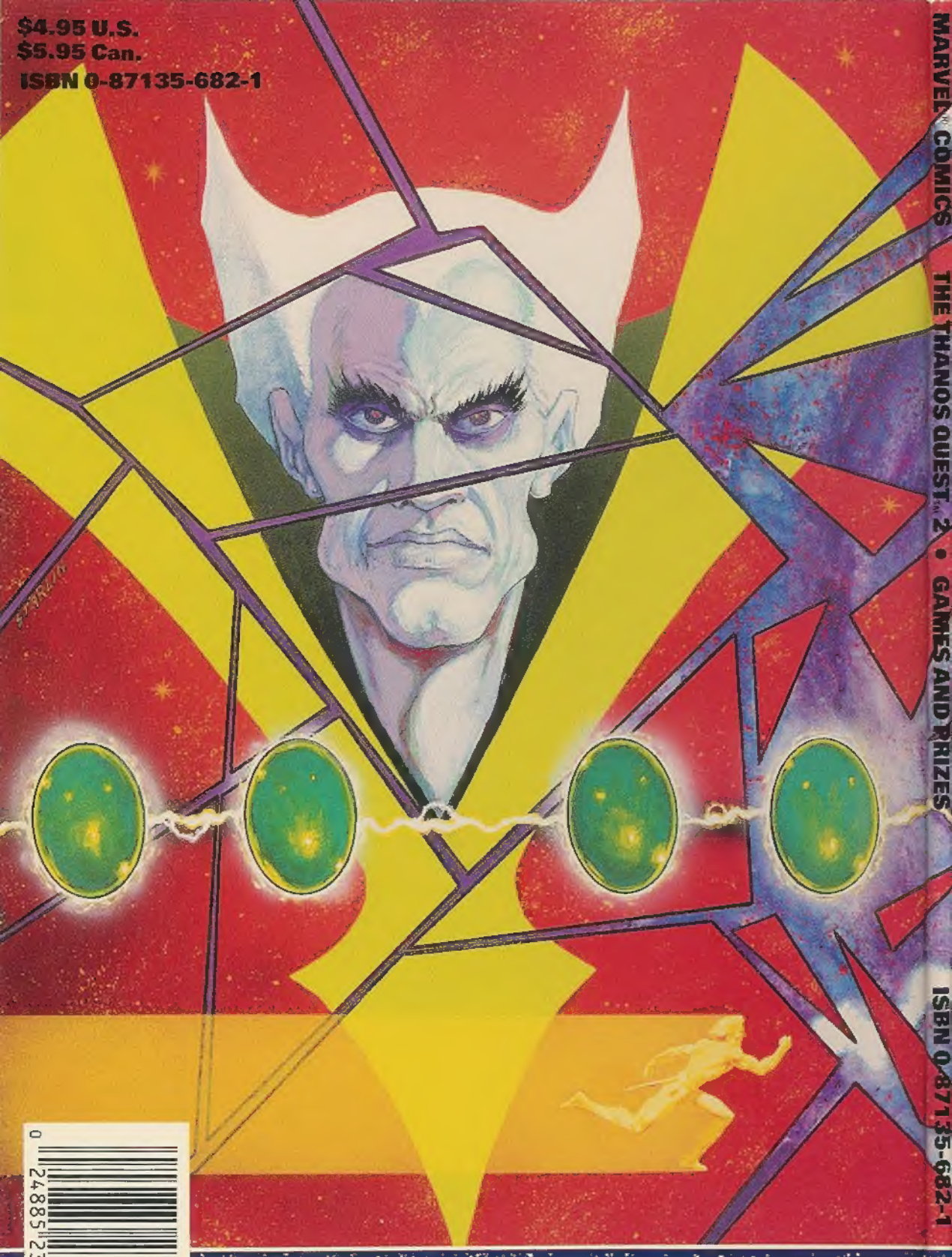

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